

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-24 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-2, 7-8 and 13-14 are amended by the present amendment. Support for the amended claims can be found in the original specification, claims and drawings.¹ No new matter is presented.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hitachi Koki Imaging Solutions, Inc. “The Internet Document Controller” (herein Hitachi) in view of Jenkins et al. (U.S. Pat. 5,365,310, herein Jenkins); and Claims 19-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hitachi in view of Jenkins and Morrell (U.S. Pat. 4,742,483).

Claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hitachi in view of Jenkins. In response to this rejection, Applicant respectfully submits that amended independent Claims 1, 7 and 13 recite novel features clearly not taught or rendered obvious by the applied references.

Amended independent Claim 1 recites, in part, a method of monitoring an image forming apparatus, comprising the steps of:

receiving... a first parameter representing a condition of at least one part of said image forming apparatus...

receiving... a second parameter after at least one image forming operation is executed by the image forming apparatus, said second parameter representing said condition...

comparing... said received first and second parameters; setting a first flag based on the comparing when the first and second parameters are different;

comparing a difference between the first parameter and the second parameter to a stored tolerance range;

setting a second flag when the difference between the first parameter and the second parameter is outside of the tolerance range; and

¹ E.g., specification, Fig. 12A and paragraphs [0055-0058].

controlling a display of said condition on a terminal that is remote from said image forming apparatus based on a setting of at least one of the first and second flags.

Claims 7 and 13, while directed to alternative embodiments, are amended to recite similar features. Accordingly, the remarks and arguments presented below are applicable to each of independent Claims 1, 7 and 13.

As described in an exemplary embodiment at Fig. 12A and paragraphs [0055-0058] of the specification, a first parameter (reference parameter) representing a condition is received and stored. Then a second parameter is received, which represents the same condition of the first parameter, but reflects the status of that condition after at least one image forming operation has been performed at the image forming apparatus. The first and second parameters are compared, and when a difference exists, a first flag is set and the difference between the parameters is compared to a threshold range to determine if the difference is outside of the range. When the difference is outside of the threshold range a second flag is set. The display of the condition is then controlled based on whether the first and/or second flag is set for the condition. For example, as recited in Claims 2, 8 and 14, when the second flag is set, the condition is displayed in a highlighted manner.

Turning to the applied references, Hitachi describes methods for remotely determining the status of image forming devices, and remotely managing the image forming devices. P. 3 of Hitachi describes a remote device management method (*i-manage*) in which a controller allows a user to remotely check a printer's status, including page counts and consumables usage. Further, p. 4 of Hitachi describes a method for monitoring an image forming apparatus (*i-service*) that allows a user to run remote diagnostics of the device and retrieve service logs indicating low toner levels and copier/printer errors. Thus, Hitachi describes a method of retrieving data from a printing device indicating a condition, when the condition satisfies a predetermined threshold.

Hitachi, however, fails to teach or suggest “comparing... received first and second parameters... setting a first flag based on the comparing when the first and second parameters are different...comparing a difference between the first parameter and the second parameter to a stored tolerance range...setting a second flag when the difference between the first parameter and the second parameter is outside of the tolerance range, and controlling a display of the condition... based on a setting of at least one of the first and second flags,” which are all features required by amended independent Claim 1.

For example, the *i-manage* feature described at p. 3 of Hitachi describes that a remote user is able to check the status of various consumables of a printer. As shown in the middle figure on p. 3, a parameter in this case may be an amount of a type of paper at the printer, and the data displayed is an amount of paper remaining at the printer. Thus, the *i-manage* feature allows a user to retrieve a specific single dynamic parameter representing the current status of the condition (paper amount) at the printer and display that parameter. Hitachi, however, fails to teach or suggest that this paper amount is compared against a second paper amount (parameter), whatsoever, much less that a difference between the two values is analyzed and a display is controlled, as claimed.

The *i-service* feature described at p. 4 allows service technicians, using a standard web browser, to run remote diagnostics and download various service logs for accounting data, such as toner low and copier/printer errors. As depicted in the second figure on p. 4, a user can set a threshold value corresponding to a printer condition (e.g. toner low, stapler empty, etc,) and when this threshold is met, a e-mail message or pager message is automatically issued to the remote monitoring device. Therefore, this cited portion of Hitachi describes that a dynamic condition parameter at the printer is compared to a threshold value for that condition, and when the condition parameter exceeds the threshold a message notification is triggered.

Thus, while the *i-service* feature of Hitachi does appear to describe comparing a condition parameter with a threshold and causing a message to be sent when the value exceeds the threshold, the reference does not disclose that first and second parameters are compared and that a difference of these parameters are compared against a tolerance range, as claimed. More specifically, Hitachi, at best, describes comparing two parameters (i.e. the current condition parameter against the predetermined threshold) and outputting data after determining that one value (e.g. level of toner) has surpassed a second threshold value (e.g. reference level of toner). Hitachi does not teach or suggest that a difference between a current condition parameter and the threshold are calculated and compared to a threshold range, whatsoever, much less that flags are set and the condition data is displayed on the basis of the set flags, as claimed.

More particularly, in addition to the deficiencies noted above, Hitachi also fails to even remotely teach or suggest “*setting a first flag* based on the comparing when the first and second parameters are different...*setting a second flag* when the difference between the first parameter and the second parameter is outside of the tolerance range, and *controlling a display* of the condition *based on a setting of at least one of the first and second flags*,” as recited in amended independent Claim 1.

Jenkins, the secondary reference, merely describes using diagnostic software to compare two images, and fails to remedy the above noted deficiencies of Hitachi.

Therefore, Hitachi and Jenkins, neither alone, nor in combination, teach or suggest “comparing... said received first and second parameters... setting a first flag based on the comparing when the first and second parameters are different...comparing a difference between the first parameter and the second parameter to a stored tolerance range...setting a second flag when the difference between the first parameter and the second parameter is

outside of the tolerance range; and controlling a display of said condition... based on a setting of at least one of the first and second flags," as recited in amended independent Claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claim 1 (and the claims that depend therefrom) under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn. For substantially similar reasons, it is also submitted that independent Claims 7 and 13 (and the claims that depend therefrom) patentably define over Hitachi and Jenkins.

With regard to the rejection of Claims 19-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Hitachi in view of Jenkins and Morrell, Applicant notes that Claims 19-24 depend from independent Claims 1, 7 and 13, and are believed to be patentable for at least the reasons discussed above. Further, Morrell fails to cure any of the above noted deficiencies of Hitachi and Jenkins.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 19-24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the invention defined by Claims 1-24 is patentably distinguishing over the applied references. The present application is therefore believed to be in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of the application is therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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